

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13
AID-05 TRSE-00 /074 W
-----312008Z 125068 /47
R 311615Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5840
INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 0277

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, AG
SUBJECT: ALGERIAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS POSTPONED

REF: ALGIERS 0233

1. MEDIA HAVE ANNOUNCED THAT NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON CANDIDATURES FOR NATIONAL POPULAR ASSEMBLY (COUNCILS OF REVOLUTION AND MINISTERS AND OTHER LEADING FIGURES) MET ON JANUARY 30, THAT ELECTIONS WOULD BE HELD ON FEB 25 AND THAT THERE WOULD BE THREE CANDIDATES FOR EACH SEAT. ORIGINAL DATE FOR ELECTIONS HAD BEEN FEB 4 AND NUMBER OF CANDIDATES PER SEAT TWO. ANNOUNCEMENT SAYS POSTPONEMENT WILL PERMIT DEEPEST POSSIBLE PREPARATION FOR VOTING, AND ADDS THAT COMMITTEE WILL CONTINUE ITS MEETINGS JAN 31.

2. PRIOR TO ANNOUNCEMENT, ELECTION NEWS HAD BEEN THIN. WE UNDERSTAND FROM ONE DIPLOMATIC SOURCE THAT NATIONAL COMMISSION HAD HELD SEVERAL UNPUBLICIZED MEETINGS FOLLOWING RETURN TO CAPITAL OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR DIRECTING WORK FOR WILAYA (PROVINCIAL) ELECTORAL COMMITTEES. ANOTHER SOURCE SAYS THAT INCREASE IN CANDIDATES PER SEAT STEMMED FROM HIGH DEGREE OF INTEREST, BOTH AT NATIONAL
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AND GRASS ROOTS LEVELS, IN HAVING PARTICULAR CANDIDATES ALLOWED TO RUN.

3. COMMENT: DECISION TO INCREASE NUMBER OF CANDIDATES SUPPORTS THEORY THAT MINISTERS SUPERVISING WILAYA-LEVEL ELECTION PREPARATIONS FOUND LOCAL INTEREST HIGH. NATIONAL COMMITTEE MAY HAVE FOUND IT PRUDENT TO ALLOW

MORE PERSONS TO RUN, PARTICULARLY SINCE MINISTERIAL INTERVENTION AT WILAYA LEVEL SEEMS AT TIMES TO HAVE BEEN HEAVY-HANDED. POSSIBILITY THAT NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS THEMSELVES AND RIVAL LISTS OF CANDIDATES DOES NOT SEEM AS FAR FETCHED AS IT DID EARLIER.

4. WHATEVER ITS CAUSE, POSTPONEMENT SUGGESTS CERTAIN REGIME DISARRAY. FEB 4 ELECTION DAY HAD BEEN ON BOOKS SINCE DEC 16 AND HAD COME TO BE REGARDED AS MOMENT AT WHICH ALGERIAN POLITICAL LIFE WOULD BE "NORMALIZED." TASK OF BUILDING LATEST SOCIALIST INSTITUTION SEEMS TO HAVE HAD MORE POLITICAL COMPLICATIONS THAN REGIME HAD ANTICIPATED.

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